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Suggested arrangements for involving non-governmental organizations and other major groups in the Summit and its preparatory process

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Background

1. The General Assembly in its resolution 55/199, encouraged effective contributions from, and the active participation of, all major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, at all stages of the preparatory process, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as its established practices for the participation and engagement of major groups.

2. In the same resolution the General Assembly requested that the Commission on Sustainable Development, acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, consider and decide on accreditation for participation in the preparatory process and the Summit of relevant non-governmental organizations that are not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and make proposals to the General Assembly on the rules and procedures for the participation of representatives of major groups in the Summit, taking into account the rules and procedures applied in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

3. The present report is prepared in response to the above requests and contains proposals on accreditation criteria and procedures for those non-governmental organizations and other major groups currently not in consultative status with the Council, and participation of major groups in the World Summit and its preparatory process. The proposals were drafted using the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as a model and using the experience gained from other global conferences since 1992 and the practices of the Commission on Sustainable Development since 1993. Proposals for the rules of procedure at the Summit are presented in a separate document (E/CN.17/2001/PC/24).

II. Proposed accreditation criteria and procedures

4. The major groups that are currently in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council as non-governmental organizations (including those on the roster through the list of the Commission on Sustainable Development) and that wish to attend and contribute to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and its preparatory committee meetings must inform the Summit secretariat and register to participate. A form will be prepared for this purpose and made available on the World Summit web site. Accredited non-governmental organizations need not register for each preparatory committee meeting separately.

5. Those non-governmental organizations and other major groups currently not in consultative status but wishing to attend and contribute to the Summit and its preparatory process may apply to the Summit secretariat for that purpose. The procedures and related forms will be available shortly after the conclusion of the first preparatory committee meeting.

6. The application requires the submission of the following information:

(a) Name of the organization and pertinent contact information, such as address, main contact, etc.;

(b) Purpose of the organization;

(c) Programmes and activities of the organization in areas relevant to the subject of the World Summit and indicating in which country, or countries, they are carried out;

(d) Confirmation of the activities of the organization at the national, regional or international levels;

(e) Copies of annual or other reports of the organization, with financial statements and a list of financial sources and contributions, including governmental contributions;

(f) A list of the members of the governing body of the organization and their countries of nationality (for international organizations);

(g) A description of the membership of the organization, indicating the total number of members, the names of organizations that are members and their geographical distribution;

(h) A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization;

(i) A completed pre-registration form prepared by the World Summit secretariat.

7. The deadline for submitting accreditation applications is four weeks before the start of each

preparatory committee meeting. Applications should be submitted to the Summit secretariat. The secretariat, with support from United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service and relevant others, as appropriate, will review the relevance of the work of the applicants on the basis of their background and involvement in sustainable development issues, particularly in the follow-up process to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. If the evaluation shows, on the basis of the information provided, that the applicant organization is competent and its activities relevant to the work of the World Summit, the secretariat will recommend to the preparatory committee that the organization be accredited. In cases where such recommendation is not made, the Summit secretariat will make available to the preparatory committee the reasons for not doing so. The Summit secretariat will submit its recommendations to the preparatory committee a week before the start of each committee meeting.

8. A non-governmental or other major group organization that has been granted accreditation to attend a session of the preparatory committee may attend all of its future sessions and the Summit itself.

III. Modalities for participation in the preparatory process and the Summit

A. Participation in the preparatory committee meetings

9. Accredited non-governmental organizations and other major groups will participate in the preparatory process in the same way they have participated in the meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Major groups that have obtained accreditation may be given an opportunity briefly to address the preparatory committee and its subsidiary bodies. If the number of requests to speak is too numerous, the preparatory committee will ask the major groups to organize themselves into issue-based constituencies, such as caucuses or coalitions, with each constituency speaking through a spokesperson. Accredited non-governmental organizations and other major groups may, at their own expense, make written presentation in the official languages of the United Nations during the preparatory process, as they deem appropriate. Those written presentations will not be issued as official documents unless they are in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures.

10. Based on the practices of the Commission on Sustainable Development, a number of multi-stakeholder dialogue segments will be organized as part of the preparatory committee meetings. Dialogue starter papers from major groups will be requested in the form of reviews of progress and future action necessary under the relevant major group chapters of Agenda 21. The planned multi-stakeholder dialogues include:

(a) In the early part of the second preparatory committee meeting, a two-day multi-stakeholder dialogue is planned with representatives from all nine major groups. The focus of the dialogue will be aligned with the issues that are on the agenda of the second preparatory committee meeting — that is, a comprehensive review and assessment of progress achieved in implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. The purpose of this dialogue will be to provide an opportunity to representatives of major groups to share their views on the progress achieved. The outcome of this dialogue will be a Chair's summary, which will be submitted to the preparatory committee and incorporated into its records;

(b) In the early part of the fourth preparatory committee meeting, a two-day multi-stakeholder dialogue is planned with representatives from all nine major groups. The focus of this dialogue will be aligned with the issues that are on the agenda of the fourth preparatory committee meeting — that is, need for a global partnership to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, reconfirming the need for an integrated and strategically focused approach to the implementation of Agenda 21, and addressing the main challenges and opportunities faced by the international community in this regard. The purpose of this second dialogue will be to provide opportunities to representatives of major groups to contribute their views on future actions and priorities. The outcome of this dialogue will be a Chair's summary, which will be submitted to the preparatory committee and incorporated into its records.

11. As in the meetings of the Commission, major group organizations will have an opportunity to organize various informal side events and briefings to

exchange views with Governments. The Summit secretariat will facilitate and coordinate these activities under the guidance of the Bureau for the Commission at its tenth session.

B. Participation modalities at the Summit

12. Accredited non-governmental organizations and other major groups will have direct access to the official Summit venue. For security and safety reasons, on some days of the Summit, a limit on the number of major group participants may need to be established. Once the Summit programme becomes clearer, the Summit secretariat will inform the major groups regarding these arrangements. Participation in the work of the Committee of the Whole will function on the same basis as at the annual sessions of the Commission.

13. A small, but representative, number of participants from major groups will be invited to address the plenary. The individual speakers will be identified through the self-organized mechanisms of the major groups, in coordination with the Chairperson of the Summit, through the Summit secretariat.

14. A half-day multi-stakeholder dialogue is planned for the Summit. This dialogue is designed to involve the highest level of representation from both major groups and Governments. The focus would be for Governments and major groups to exchange and publicly announce the specific commitments they have made for the next phase of work in sustainable development. In the case of Governments, the commitments are expected to emerge from, inter alia, national efforts to identify national progression targets (a process proposed by the Summit secretariat and already under way in a number of countries). In the case of major groups, commitments and targets are expected to emerge from national, regional and international consultations of major group organizations. A record of the commitments announced and shared could be made and released as part of the Summit outcomes.

15. In addition, consideration is being given to organizing some of the plenary sessions as a series of partnership events with stakeholders. These could be in the form of dialogues and may include those of a multi-stakeholder nature. The details and topics of these dialogues will be announced once they are further clarified.

16. Other stakeholder events and activities are also expected to take place such as informal roundtables with major groups and Governments on specific issues, parallel events and various side events.

C. Funding

17. The Summit secretariat will facilitate the funding of participants from developing countries and countries-in-transition in the multi-stakeholder dialogue. The funding needs of other participants from major groups continues to be an issue. The Summit secretariat is making an effort to support funding proposals that major groups are submitting to various funding sources.